

WASHINGTON, DC -- Today, in response to the decision this week by Major League Baseball owners to eliminate two teams prior to the start of the 2002 season, Congressman Blumenauer (D-OR) re-introduced his Give Fans a Chance legislation. The Give Fans a Chance Act of 2001 gives communities a voice when sports team owners attempt to relocate or eliminate a team. This legislation recognizes the fact that professional sports teams are an integral part of the fabric that makes up our communities.

"If the owners have their way, two communities that have poured their hearts and money into their teams and stadiums will be feeling worse than the residents of Mudville after the mighty Casey struck out - at least the fans of the Mudville nine were able to look forward to next year," said Blumenauer.

Blumenauer's bill accomplishes three important objectives. It eliminates league rules that disallow public ownership of sports team franchises, gives communities a voice in team relocation decisions and ties broadcast antitrust exemptions to the bill's requirements. The legislation makes professional sports leagues and their team owners appropriately consider the communities of which they are a part. Taxpayers and fans contribute soul and money to the teams of their communities and they deserve a voice when the threat of team relocation or elimination steps into the batter's box.

"There probably has never been a better example of the link between the spirit of a community and its sports teams than New York," said Blumenauer, "The sports teams of New York have all helped bring the community together and deal with the tragedy that struck the city on September 11, 2001. The memorable World Series just completed between the Arizona Diamondbacks and the New York Yankees has in fact helped the nation heal in the wake of the terrorist attacks."

For more information on Congressman Blumenauer's work on this issue, visit his web site at <http://www.house.gov/blumenauer/>.